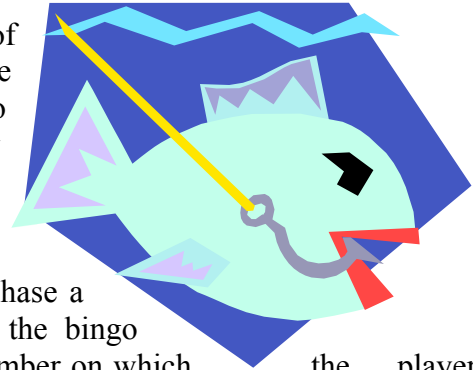


Don't Get "Caught" Playing Fish Bowl Bingo

It has recently come to the attention of the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) that some bingo operators may be offering a game called Fish Bowl to their patrons. Fish Bowl, also known as Star Bowl or Wish Bowl, is an illegal gambling activity when conducted as part of a bingo occasion. Fish bowl drawings, however, may be legal when conducted as a raffle.



According to one of the schemes reported to DIA, players purchase a chance to win money in a fish bowl. At the beginning of the bingo occasion, the caller draws a bingo ball that then becomes the number on which the player must bingo to win the "fish bowl." If no one bingos on the pre-selected number or the person who does bingo on the number has not paid into the fish bowl, the fish bowl is carried over to the next occasion and players are permitted to purchase more chances. Technically, the fish bowl is a raffle and cannot be used in conjunction with a bingo game.

Bingo operators providing this type of game to their patrons should cease offering this game as the continued playing of Fish Bowl could jeopardize their qualified organization license.

Iowa Code Chapter 99B defines a raffle as a game in which players purchase a ticket for a chance at a prize with the winner determined by a random method. Iowa Code section 99B.1(22) further provides that the winner need not be present to win. Fish Bowl, as described above, is a raffle and should not be included as part of a bingo game. In order for a bingo operator to make Fish Bowl available to his or her patrons, the game must be offered as a raffle and any prize amount must be awarded separate from a bingo prize. Bingo prize amounts cannot exceed \$100 in value.

Bingo operators with a qualified organization license may conduct raffles. An operator may offer a Fish Bowl Raffle as a separate activity, distinct from a bingo game. Tickets must be handled separately, and receipts and prize amounts cannot be co-mingled. The following guidelines will help bingo operators set up a legitimate Fish Bowl Raffle, if the operator wants to use the concept:

- Determine the dates of the raffle, and post them beside the Fish Bowl.
- Sell tickets for the event. Theater tickets that come on a roll and can be split, one for the customer and one for the Fish Bowl, are inexpensive and easy to use. You may want to use the cash register receipt for the raffle by having the customer sign his name, address and phone number on the back and placing them in the fish bowl.
- Pay the "pot" of the price of tickets to the winner. If you are trying to raise money for your organization, you could hold a 50/50 raffle. The pot would be split with half going to the customer and half going to the organization.
- Have a drawing to determine the winner on the predetermined date.
- Keep bingo and the raffle separate. Do not draw bingo balls to determine the winner of the raffle.

If you have questions about a particular bingo game or raffle, please contact the Department's Social and Charitable Gambling Program at (515) 281-6848, or by e-mail at jpika@dia.state.ia.us.